

Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce

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February 12, 2003

Honorable Michael Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20544

RE: CC Docket No. 01-338, Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers

Dear Commissioner Powell:

As a representative of small business owners in Fresno, California, our growth is dependent on access to the latest technologies and advancements in the telecommunications industry – and at a reasonable price. That is why, more than ever, the telecommunications industry's unrest is a serious concern. The Chamber is deeply concerned with the situation and how it is affecting business.

It is clear that the telecommunications downturn has reverberations throughout communities nationwide. It is time the FCC creates a level playing field for telecommunications companies to compete on - and looks out for the interests of small businesses.

It is critical that the FCC establishes a national framework governing the telecom industry that encourages investment in infrastructure and creates an environment allowing for long-term, sustainable competition.

The current regulations stifle competition – and drive up prices for small businesses, as well as make it difficult and costly to deploy the telecommunications services that we need for our businesses to grow and succeed. The FCC should eliminate the unbundled network element platform (UNE-P), which has devastated investment and growth. Moreover, the FCC should eliminate other unbundling requirements where facilities-based competition has developed.

Furthermore, the FCC should seek to pave the way for new telecommunications services to be rolled out more quickly and efficiently. In particular, broadband deployment has been sluggish due to inefficient regulations. Freeing broadband investment from costly unbundling requirements will encourage further investment and the deployment of valuable new technologies nationwide.

Sincerely,

Stebbins F. Dean
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Commissioner Abernathy
Commissioner Adelstein
Commissioner Martin
Commissioner Copps